



March 7, 2014

TESTIMONY CONCERNING S.B. No. 340 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A TWO-GENERATIONAL SCHOOL READINESS PLAN

Good afternoon, Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on Senate Bill No. 340, *An Act Concerning a Two-Generational School Readiness Plan*. My name is Susan Weisselberg, and I am the Chief of Wraparound Services for New Haven Public Schools. As Chief of Wraparound Services, I work with many providers and others to utilize a framework that will improve our service delivery in a fashion consistent with School Change and needs in the schools, families and community. It is a challenging task, and all help is welcome.

We are excited about the potential of this legislation. Many of our families need some form of childcare, whether for their children ages 0-3 or for ages 3-5 – and they also need before and/or after-school care too. If Care4Kids paid for childcare while parents are getting GED, attending adult education classes, or attending certificate programs linked to jobs, we are truly helping families, and making a difference in the lives of their children. And, if the school readiness portion is just not Care4Kids but other childcare subsidies as necessary, that would be helpful too.

We also endorse the notion of utilizing home visits as part of this process. In New Haven, several entities conduct home visits: the MOMS partnership, the Housing Authority for its tenants, providers such as Clifford Beers, care coordinators, City of New Haven Health Department (Healthy Start and Nurturing Families Network), and New Haven Public Schools truancy officers. Our five family resource centers reach out to families, as do many others. We envision informal and formal models for home visits, encompassing more than those funded by the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program.

We would ask to be part of a pilot program on a two-generational school readiness plan; in fact, you may want to consider a third generation, as we have a number of grandparents raising their grandchildren. We would ask that a home visit coordinator be included in any pilot funding for a community, so that the various types of home visits can be coordinated. We would ask that there be an ability to share data, so that additional strategies can be deployed based upon more detailed information. We would be interested in an expansion of EvenStart, aligned with this pilot.

We envision this involving several state agencies, such as the State Department of Education, DSS and the Department of Labor, as well as the Office of Early Childhood and the Commission on Children. And, given that we have our own P-20 council and that there is a statewide P-20 council, perhaps that should be included too – or a representative from the Board of Regents.

Thank you.